



E Pluribus Unum

NEWSLETTER

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WHY GUNS?



by L. Neil Smith

Over the past 30 years, I've been paid to write almost two million words, every one of which, sooner or later, came back to the issue of guns and gun-ownership. Naturally, I've thought about the issue a lot, and it has "always" determined the way I vote.

People accuse me of being a single-issue writer, a single-issue thinker, and a single-issue voter, but it isn't true. What I've chosen, in a world where there's never enough time and energy, is to focus on the one political issue which most clearly and unmistakably demonstrates what any politician "or political philosophy" is made of, right down to the creamy liquid center.

Make no mistake: all politicians "even those ostensibly on the side of guns and gun ownership" hate the issue and anyone, like me, who insists on bringing it up. They hate it because it's an X-ray machine. It's a Vulcan mind-meld. It's the ultimate test to which any politician — or political philosophy — can be put.

If a politician isn't perfectly comfortable with the idea of his average constituent, any man, woman, or responsible

child, walking into a hardware store and paying cash — for any rifle, shotgun, handgun, machinegun, "anything" — without producing ID or signing one scrap of paper, he isn't your "friend" no matter what he tells you.

If he isn't genuinely enthusiastic about his average constituent stuffing that weapon into a purse or pocket or tucking it under a coat and walking home without asking anybody's permission, he's a four-flusher, no matter what he claims.

What his attitude — toward your ownership and use of weapons — conveys is his real attitude about "you". And if he doesn't trust you, then why in the name of John Moses Browning should you trust him?

If he doesn't want you to have the means of defending your life, do you want him in a position to control it?

If he makes excuses about obeying a law he's sworn to uphold and defend — the highest law of the land, the Bill of Rights — do you want to entrust him with "anything"?

If he ignores you, sneers at you, complains about you, or defames you, if he calls you names only he thinks are evil — like "Constitutionalist" — when you insist that he account for himself, hasn't he betrayed his oath, isn't he unfit to hold

office, and doesn't he really belong in "jail"?

Sure, these are all leading questions. They're the questions that led me to the issue of guns and gun ownership as the clearest and most unmistakable demonstration of what any given politician — or political philosophy — is really made of.

He may lecture you about the dangerous weirdos out there who shouldn't have a gun — but what does that have to do with you? Why in the name of John Moses Browning should you be made to suffer for the misdeeds of others? Didn't you lay aside the infantile notion of group punishment when you left public school — or the military?

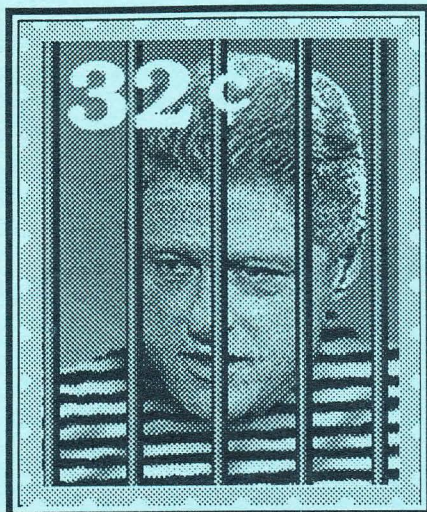
Isn't it an essentially European notion, anyway — Prussian, maybe — and certainly not what America was supposed to be all about?

And if there are dangerous weirdos out there, does it make sense to deprive you of the means of protecting yourself from them?

Forget about those other people, those dangerous weirdos, this is about "you", and it has been, all along.

Try it yourself: if a politician won't trust you, why should you trust him? If he's a man "and you're not" what does his lack of trust tell you about his real attitude toward women? If "he" happens to be a "woman", what makes her so perverse that she's eager to render her fellow women helpless on the mean and seedy streets her policies helped create? Should you believe her when she says she wants

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"...21st century predators feed on technology and the free flow of information and ideas and people..."

- Bill Clinton
"State of the Union"
1/27/98

Dear Mr. President,

Tyranny breeds and grows and gains strength in dark and hidden places. The "free flow of information and ideas and people" has never in the course of human history shown itself to be anything short of miraculous...when information and ideas are available to citizens, it strengthens their yearnings for liberty and self-determination. That is why totalitarian regimes such as China find "the free flow of information and ideas" so completely distasteful and terrifying. They realize that unless they are able to control access to ideas and information, they will eventually loose their iron grip on the lives of a billion Chinese. And they fear that most of all.

So, Mr. President, why do you believe it is threatening to have a free flow of ideas and information and people? Is that not the very bedrock of self-government? The freedom to travel, the freedom to express ideas and to exchange information are only hazardous to those who are concerned they may lose mastery over others. Why else would someone wish to control what other people see, read and hear?

It has always been my understanding that as Americans we are considered the freest of the free. Since the birth of this nation our foreign policy has been directed toward gaining such self-government for the citizens other nations and punishing those governments who refuse to grant autonomy to their people. Yet United States citizens have lost more and more of their liberty each year. How do you explain this phenomenon?

Can you explain, Mr. President, why your administration thinks it should have access to the contents of all electronic communications? I have heard the standard lines about law enforcement, etc. but I fail to see how having the ability to eavesdrop at will on all citizens will advance the cause of law enforcement. It is simply an engraved invitation to the kinds of abuse we have seen in the past, not only here, but in other countries such as the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

You also seem to believe it is the duty of the government to supervise the content of the Internet. Oh, of course you could never do this directly, so you attempted to place the responsibility upon the common carriers to monitor the content of the communications thru their networks. Thank God Almighty this concept was struck down by the Supreme Court as the imposition upon the Constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech it truly is!

And what about the free flow of people? Do you wish for the U.S. to become a closed nation with walled borders? What of movement within those borders? Why is there now a provision for what is essentially a National ID Card within the Immigration Reform Act? Why is government issued ID demanded at all airport ticket counters before someone can board a plane, even for domestic flights? In order to move about on the nations (tax supported) highways, we must have and produce upon demand government granted permission to travel. We are required to register our private property in order to utilize it on public (tax supported) roads. Where does it end?

Mr. President, I respectfully request answers! Why are the freedoms and liberties of American Citizens being gradually removed from us? The threats of terrorists and drug dealers and violent criminals have been used to try and convince us that we need to be protected. Why are we not exhorted to take responsibility for our own safety? Why do you feel that you must provide 100,000 police officers who are not legally bound to protect individuals, but simply serve and protect the community at large? Is this not simply a jobs program?

We see thru your shenanigans and trickery! Please explain to us when they will stop! I am calling on you to be honest with the American people and explain the true motivations for the anxiety you regularly express regarding the free flow of information and ideas and people!

Mr. President, I anxiously await your thoughts on these most significant matters! Your prompt attention is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Sue Frederick

Let Jurors Reject Bad Laws

By JEFF COLLINS

The Orange County Register
December 30, 1997

BUENA PARK - A pastor convicted of violating city laws by housing the homeless at his church plans to launch an initiative drive aimed at giving jurors the option to reject unjust laws.

The Rev. Wiley Drake maintains that jurors have "the lawful right and power" to disregard unjust laws. Drake plans to unveil a petition drive Friday to get his proposal on the California ballot.

If his measure passes, judges would be required to instruct jurors that they have the right "to acquit the defendant, or find him/her not liable for damages" if they find that a law is unjust or that the application of it would be unjust.

Drake and the First Southern Baptist Church were each found guilty of four misdemeanor counts in July. He was sentenced to 1,500 hours of community service and given three years' probation.

But the pastor maintains that several jurors later apologized "for their misguided conviction" of him.

William Kopeny, an Irvine appellate attorney, said the propose initiative probably would be found unconstitutional by the court because it violates a person's right of equal protection under the law.

However, jurors always can disregard a law, and their reasons for reaching a verdict can't be used to overturn that verdict, Kopeny said.

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For more articles about Rev. Drake, check out the OCR web page: <http://www.ocregister.com>

GOA Update

By Vin Suprynowicz
Feb. 8 GOA

Last time, we were discussing the "take-the-best-available-compromise," defeatist attitude of the nation's largest gun control organization, the National Rifle Association.

Their lighter, leaner competition for gun owner support, Gun Owners of America, prefers a more high-pressure approach, putting the fire to the feet of lawmakers to make sure they know that a vote against gun rights will cost them their next election ... just as Bill Clinton acknowledged that the gun rights vote cost the Democratic Party its control of Congress in 1994.

In a 1968 edition of the NRA's magazine, "The American Rifleman," Associate Editor Alan C. Webber responded to then-timely criticism by U.S. Sen. Robert Kennedy, D-N.Y., who said "I think it is a terrible indictment of the National Rifle Association that they haven't supported any legislation to ban and control the misuse of rifles and pistols in this country."

To this, Mr. Webber reports NRA Executive Vice President Franklin L. Orth responded with a ringing endorsement of the 1968 Gun Control Act. "The National Rifle Association has been in support of workable, enforceable gun control legislation since its very inception in 1871," Mr. Orth proclaimed.

"The duty of Congress is clear. It should act now to pass legislation that will keep undesirables, including criminals, drug addicts and persons adjudged mentally irresponsible or alcoholic, or juveniles, from obtaining firearms through the mails."

One will remember that the way the 1968 law accomplished that, was by banning EVERYONE but an ever-shrinking pool of federally licensed gun dealers from "obtaining firearms through the mails"! Sort of like "getting drunks off the road," by banning cars and trucks!

"The NRA position, as stated by Orth, emphasizes that the NRA has con-

sistently supported gun legislation which it feels would penalize misuse of guns, without harassing law-abiding hunters, target shooters and collectors," concludes editor Webber.

What an interesting list. Do you see "militiamen" in there? I don't. Does the Second Amendment say anything about duck-hunting?

The Brits, who have just finished banning all private ownership of handguns, insist THEY still protect the "rights of law-abiding hunters, target shooters, and collectors," too.

If you have an English country estate, you can still own a richly-engraved, \$5,000 bird gun. If you like to target shoot, you may fire pellet guns or even .22s at your registered club ... so long as you leave the weapon locked up there when you go home. And "collectors" are still presumably welcome to own as many guns as they want ... from the flintlock era or earlier.

Gee, that'll put them in great shape the next time the Germans or French come storming the beaches. Which is precisely why OUR Second Amendment talks exclusively about the needs of "the militia."

Meantime, Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms agents holding a panel discussion for an audience of mostly gun store owners at this week's SHOT Outdoor Trades show, here in Las Vegas, declared that the way they interpret the "permanent replacement Brady Bill" due to go into effect in November of 1998 — the one the NRA favors due to its promised "insta-Check" capability will call for a "Brady check" and permanent record of every LONG GUN purchase, as well.

The NRA operates, in effect, as nothing but a public relations outreach arm for the Republican Party, tasked to convince gun rights advocates that the GOP is their only hope.

But Newt Gingrich promised us that if only we would elect a GOP majority to Congress there would be "no more gun control passed" on his watch, didn't he?

Mind you, that's a pretty modest promise, compared to the Libertarian Party platform plank on guns, which calls

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to help you by imposing some infantile group health care program on you at the point of the kind of gun she doesn't want you to have?

On the other hand — or the other party — should you believe anything politicians say who claim they stand for freedom, but drag their feet and make excuses about repealing limits on your right to own and carry weapons? What does this tell you about their real motives for ignoring voters and ramming through one infantile group trade agreement after another with other countries?

Makes voting simpler, doesn't it? You don't have to study every issue — health care, international trade — all you have to do is use this X-ray machine, this Vulcan mind-meld, to get beyond their empty words and find out how politicians really feel. About you. And that, of course, is why they hate it.

And that's why I'm accused of being a single-issue writer, thinker, and voter.

But it isn't true, is it?

L. Neil Smith is the award-winning author of "Bretta Martyn", "The Probability Broach", "The Crystal Empire", "Henry Martyn", "The Lando Calrissian Adventures", and "Pallas". He is also an NRA Life Member and founder of the Libertarian Second Amendment Caucus.

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for ALL existing gun control laws to be immediately REPEALED.

But not only have Mr. Gingrich's Republicans failed to repeal the major federal gun control acts of 1933 and 1968, not only have they failed to repeal the Brady Bill and the Feinstein-Schumer "assault weapons ban" (as they promised), but they actually ENACTED the so-called Anti-Terrorism Bill with the Lautenberg Amendment, which retroactively strips police and many other citizens of their gun rights based on any prior domestic misdemeanor convictions (shouting at your kids).

And then, not satisfied, they went on to pass the "Gun Free School Zone Act" ... TWICE!

Putting him to the test of fire, I asked Larry Pratt of GOA last week whether he would favor allowing a 17-year-old girl to walk into a hardware store, buy and take home a belt-fed .30-caliber machine gun, without signing her name, showing any ID, or applying for any kind of government "permit."

"Well, that's the way it would have been in 1933, before the National Firearms Act, wouldn't it?" he asked.

"Is that a yes?" I asked back.

Mr. Pratt, in front of a sizeable public gathering at the San Remo Hotel and Casino, said "Yes."

And that's why I think we're about to see a changing of the guard when it comes to gun-rights lobbying, from the

arthritis and the defeated, to the aggressive, the fearless, and the principled.

Congressman Ron Paul, R-Tex., has called Gun Owners of America "the only no-compromise gun lobby in Washington." With a fraction of the NRA's manpower, membership or budget, GOA has defeated powerful state legislative committee chairmen (in Ohio) who were foolish enough to support more gun control, and has helped elect congressmen like Roscoe Bartlett of Maryland, currently sponsor of HR27, the Citizens Self-Defense Act, which would "protect the right to obtain ... and to use firearms in defense of self, family or home."

Unless they change their stripes with fearsome speed, I fear the NRA and their hog-trough affiliate, the Republican Party as we've known it, are headed for the elephant's graveyard, and soon.

On the other hand, if Gun Owners of America sold stock, I'd be buying.

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"If ye love wealth greater than liberty, the tranquility of servitude greater than the animating contest for freedom, go home from us in peace.

We seek not your counsel, nor your arms. Crouch down and lick the hand that feeds you. May your chains set lightly upon you; and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen."

— Samuel Adams

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